

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEA-14 EUR-25 AF-10 CU-04 AID-20 IO-14

OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01

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R 281056Z JUNE 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4786

INFO CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 7739

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: GOP RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE

1. AFTER SOME INITIAL CONFUSION, GOP HAS DECIDED TO REACT TO COMMUNIQUE BY ACCENTING POSITIVE. PRESIDENT ISSUED STATEMENT JUNE 27 WHICH (A) EXPRESSES GRATIFICATION THAT COMMUNIQUE CONFIRMS "WISDOM OF STEPS WE HAVE TAKEN TO ATTAIN LASTING SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF CULTURAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES"; (B) ASSERTED THAT HE HAS DEALT DIRECTLY WITH THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN UP ARMS (REPLYING TO COMMUNIQUE'S RECOMMENDATION THAT GOP TALK WITH MNLF) AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO; (C) APPRECIATES FACT THAT ISLAMIC COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT PROBLEM MUST BE SOLVED AS INTERNAL PROBLEM; (D) WELCOMES ASSISTANCE TO "ON-GOING PROJECTS THAT I HAVE ALREADY INSTITUTED."

2. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED MEDIA HAS ECHOED LINE TAKEN BY PRESIDENT. IT HAS NOT PRINTED OR REFERRED TO COMMUNI-
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QUE ALTHOUGH IT EARLIER CARRIED ARTICLES ON GROUP OF 4 REPORT. ADDING TO IMPRESSION OF SUCCESS OF CONFERENCE, MEDIA HAS REPORTED VISITS OF LEBANON FOREIGN MINISTER NAFFA JUNE 28-JULY 1, AND SECRETARY GENERAL DR. AL-TOHAMY JULY 1-3. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND GOVERNMENT IS BRINGING LARGE NUMBER OF MUSLIM OFFICIALS NORTH TO MANILA POSSIBLY TO TALK ABOUT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND AT LEAST TO BE PARADED BEFORE VISITORS. (PNA STORY FROM MOSCOW ADDS ADDITIONAL BUT CURIOUS NOTE OF ROSINESS IN JUNE 28 PRESS, ALLEGING THAT PROF. G.A. FUROV, DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES, TOLD VISITING LABOR SECRETARY OPLE "THAT EXTREMISM OF MUSLIM REACTIONARIES YOUR COUNTRY IS PARTICULARLY HARMFUL AND THAT DEVELOPMENT COURSE TAKEN BY GOP IS CORRECT COURSE.")

3. SECRETARY MELCHOR TOLD ECONOMIC COUNSELOR JUNE 27 THAT CONFERENCE RESULTS WERE NOT AS BAD AS EXPECTED. HE CLEARLY DID NOT LIKE THEM.

4. DFA SECRETARY ROMULO TOLD DCM JUNE 28 THAT GOP REASONABLY PLEASED AT CONCLUSIONS OF CONFERENCE. HE WAS ESPECIALLY PLEASED AT STALWART ASSISTANCE GIVEN GOP CAUSE BY INDONESIANS AND EGYPTIANS, AND WELCOMED MORE MODERATE ROLE OF MALAYSIANS, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO MALAYSIA'S OWN PROBLEMS STEMMING FROM MURDER OR POLICE COMMISSIONER AND IMBROGLIO WITH THAILAND OVER THAI MUSLIM PROBLEM.

5. COMMENT: GOP HAS GOOD REASON TO BE PLEASED THAT CONFERENCE DID NOT ENDORSE LIBYAN PROGRAM OF SUPPORT OF REBELLION. AND IT MUST BE PARTICULARLY PLEASED AT ACTIVE SUPPORT PROVIDED ITS CAUSE BY INDONESIANS. BUT LIBYA'S STATEMENT THAT IT WILL CONTINUE TO ASSIST MNLF OBVIOUSLY CAN ONLY BE REGARDED WITH DISMAY. RECENT ESCALATION OF FIGHTING IN MINDANAO TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH CONFERENCE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY BITTER. WE ASSUME FIGHTING WILL DIE DOWN BUT CASUALTIES IMPOSED ON AFP, AND INTRODUCTION OF SABOTAGE TACTICS, UNDERLIES VERY KEEN DESIRE OF GOP THAT MINDANAO SITUATION BE INTERPRETED AS GENUINELY INTERNAL PROBLEM.

6. ALTHOUGH COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT SUPPORT ARMED REBELLION, IT SUGGESTS A HIGHLY INTERVENTIONIST ROLE FOR ALL KINDS OF

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INTERESTED MUSLIM PARTIES. GOP WILL WANT TO MAKE CAREFUL ASSESSMENT OF REAL MEANING OF COMMUNIQUE AND LIKELY POST-CONFERENCE ATTITUDES OF ISLAMIC STATES.

7. WHILE GOP IS ASSESSING POST-CONFERENCE ATTITUDES, IT WILL BE UNDER GUN TO CONTINUE TO FEED IMPRESSION OF FORWARD MOVEMENT ON GOVERNMENTAL SOLUTIONS OF MUSLIM PLIGHT. WE

ASSUME GOP WILL ALSO HAVE TO LOOK MORE SERIOUSLY AT REAL IMPLEMENTATION OF MUSLIM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN VIEW OF AGREEMENT TO ACCEPT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE WELFARE FUND ASSISTANCE AND DISCUSSIONS IT WILL HOLD WITH DR. AL-TOHMY. KEY RELATED STEP WILL PROBABLY BE TO RENEW EFFORTS TO SIT DOWN WITH RAZAK.

8. WE WILL COMMENT FURTHER AFTER ABBAS AND MASTURA HAVE RETURNED AND GOP HAS HAD CHANCE TO FORMULATE MORE CONSIDERED OPINION ON CONFERENCE AND ACTIONS GOP WILL NOT TAKE.
SULLIVAN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMUNIQUE, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MINORITIES, MOSLEMS, PARAMILITARY FORCES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MANILA07739
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D740172-0158
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740684/aaaahaze.tel
Line Count: 130
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <24 MAR 2003 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971027
Subject: GOP RESPONSE TO ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE
TAGS: PFOR, RP, MNLF, PFOR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005